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A

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(only for nonprovisional applications under 37 CFR § 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No.

249768040US

First Inventor or Application Identifier

Ryan Snodgrass

Title

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT PURCHASES

Express Mail Label No.

EL404935591US

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

ADDRESS TO:

Box Patent Application
Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 202311. ☐ Authorization for Extensions & Fee Transmittal
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)2. ☒ Specification [Total Pages] 21
(preferred arrangement set forth below)

- Descriptive Title of the Invention
- Cross References to Related Applications
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D
- Reference to sequence listing, a table, or a computer program listing appendix
- Background of the Invention

- Brief Summary of the Invention
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)
- Detailed Description
- Claim(s)
- Abstract of the Disclosure

3. ☐ Applicant claims small entity status.
See 37 CFR 1.274. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 USC 113) [Total Sheets] 95. Oath or Declaration [Total Pages]

- a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)
- b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63(d))
(for continuation/divisional with Box 17 completed)
- i. ☐ **DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)**
Signed statement attached deleting
inventor(s) named in the prior application,
see 37 CFR 1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b)

6. ☐ Application Data Sheet. (See 37 CFR 1.76)7. ☐ CD-Rom or CD-R in duplicate, large table or
Computer Program (Appendix)8. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission
(if applicable, all necessary)

- a. ☐ Computer-Readable Copy
- b. Specification Sequence Listing on.
- i. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R (2 copies); or
- ii. ☐ paper
- c. ☐ Statements verifying identity of above copies

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

9. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))10. ☐ 37 CFR 3 73(b) Statement ☐ Power of Attorney
(when there is an assignee)11. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)12. ☐ Information Disclosure
Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS
Citations13. ☐ Preliminary Amendment14. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)
(if foreign priority is claimed)16. ☐ Other: _____

17. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-In-Part (CIP) of prior Application No.: _____

Prior application information: Examiner _____ Group / Art Unit _____

For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL apps only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied under Box 5b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying continuation or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference. The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

☐ Claims the benefit of Provisional Application No. _____

18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Customer Number 25096 / Barcode



25096

PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Respectfully submitted,

TYPED or PRINTED NAME Steven D. Lawrence

SIGNATURE

REGISTRATION NO. 37,376

Date 11/20/00

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT PURCHASES

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention is directed to the field of shopping information systems.

BACKGROUND

5 The World Wide Web (“the Web”) is a system for publishing information, in which users may use a Web browser application to retrieve information, such as Web pages, from Web servers and display it. Search engines, subject indices, and links between Web pages and Web sites facilitate the exploration of information published on the Web.

10 The Web has increasingly become a medium used to shop for products. Indeed, thousands and thousands of different products may be purchased on the Web. A user who plans to purchase a product on the Web can visit the Web site of a Web merchant that sells the product, view information about the product, give an instruction to purchase the product, and provide information needed to complete the purchase, such as payment and shipping information.

15 Like other types of merchants, Web merchants generate revenue and profits by selling products to customers. Thus, aspects of a Web merchant’s Web site that directly facilitate the sale of products contribute to the Web merchant’s level of profitability. For instance, the one-click purchase system developed by Amazon.com, by making it easier for customers to complete their purchase of products, contributes to the level of profitability of
20 Web merchants employing this system.

 In addition to aspects of a Web merchant’s Web site that directly facilitate the sale of products, other aspects of a Web merchant’s Web site may also contribute to the Web merchant’s level of profitability. Principal among these other aspects of a Web merchant’s Web site are aspects that motivate more customers and potential customers (hereafter
25 “users”) to visit the Web merchant’s Web site more often, and to “remain” there, viewing

content, for longer periods of time. The extent to which a Web site motivates users in this way is sometimes referred to as the Web site's level of "stickiness."

A Web merchant that has a particularly sticky Web site is often able to improve profitability in a number of ways. First, because more users visit the Web site more frequently and remain longer, the Web merchant has more opportunities to sell products to users, and ultimately sells more products to users. Second, if the Web merchant elects to display advertisements on its Web site, the level of revenue realized from such advertising increases as traffic on the Web merchant's Web site increases. Third, if the Web merchant elects to enter into referral or traffic sharing agreements with other Web sites, a high level of traffic on the Web merchant's Web site can increase the revenue derived from these agreements, or at least reduce the cost of these agreements. Fourth, to the extent that the Web site can encourage users to contribute content to the Web site, such user-contributed contents can make the Web site still stickier, reinforcing the other ways in which stickiness contributes to profitability. Thus, any aspects of a Web merchant's Web site that increase the stickiness of the Web page can improve profitability for the Web merchant.

One reason attributed to the somewhat low rate at which users have accepted shopping on the Web is that, while shopping on the Web usually satisfies the utilitarian purpose that most people have for shopping at physical stores, shopping on the Web generally falls short of fulfilling the "entertainment" or "shared activity" purposes that many people also have for shopping at physical stores. Accordingly, a new feature of a Web merchant Web site that helped to fulfill these "entertainment" and "shared activity" purposes of shopping, particularly one that increased the level of stickiness of the Web site, would have significant utility.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a high-level block diagram showing the environment in which the facility typically operates.

Figure 2 is a display diagram showing a first portion of a shared purchases Web page for a sharing user whose nickname is "jj."

Figure 3 is a display diagram showing a subsequent portion of the shared purchases Web page shown in Figure 2.

Figure 4 is a display diagram showing a “Friends and Favorites” Web page for a user other than jj.

Figure 5 is a display diagram showing a product description Web page.

Figure 6 is a display diagram showing a display produced in response to an
5 order by the user Steve for a product.

Figure 7 is a display diagram showing a display usable by a user to share and offer feedback on past purchases.

Figure 8 is a display diagram showing a display showing a page for a user “Ryan” referencing the friends best sellers list for the user Ryan.

10 Figure 9 is a display diagram showing the contents of the friends best sellers list for the user Ryan.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A purchase sharing software facility enables users, referred to as “sharing users,” to selectively share information about their purchases with other users. At various
15 points, the facility enables a sharing user to select for sharing products that the sharing user has purchased. For example, the sharing user may select a product for sharing at the time the product is purchased, or at a later time.

The user may optionally select or define a group of users with which information about the selected purchase will be shared. The user may also choose to share
20 information about the selected purchase with all users, or to share different amounts of information about the selected purchase with different groups of users, or to share information about different groups of users in different contexts.

The sharing user may also optionally add information to the information that is shared for a particular shared purchase. For example, the sharing user may add a rating of
25 the purchased product, or a review or other discussion of the product.

After a sharing user has selected a purchase for sharing, information about the purchase is provided to any users that are in the group or groups of users designated by the sharing user to receive it. For example, when a user in this group visits a web page containing a description of the purchased product, the facility may display a visual indication
30 that the sharing user purchased the product. The indication may either be accompanied by

additional details about the sharing user's purchase of the product, or may include a link to additional details. Additional details may include the date on which the sharing user purchased the product and the sharing user's feedback on the product. Information about the shared purchase may also be provided to users in the designated group when they visit a page
5 containing information about the sharing user, or may be transmitted to those users in messages of various types. In addition to the additional details mentioned above, the information about the purchase displayed on this page may also include information about the product, including its name, a description, an image, and controls for purchasing the product or adding it to a wish list.

10 In some embodiments, the facility provides a "friends best sellers list" to users. The friends best sellers list identifies products purchased by one or more users that have a purchase information sharing relationship with the current user. In certain embodiments, the friends best seller list is sorted in decreasing order of the number of other users having the purchase information sharing relationship that purchased each product.

15 By facilitating the sharing of purchase information in this manner, the facility adds to the online shopping model a sense of "entertainment" or "shared activity" typically missing from online shopping. In the process, it both directly facilitates the sale of products, and indirectly contributes to the Web merchant's level of profitability by significantly increasing the stickiness level of the Web merchant Web site.

20 Figure 1 is a high-level block diagram showing the environment in which the facility typically operates. The block diagram shows several client computer systems, such as client computer systems 110, 120, and 130. Each of the client computer systems has a Web client computer program for browsing the World Wide Web, such as Web clients 111, 121, and 131. The client computer systems are connected via the Internet 140 to a server
25 computer system 150 hosting the facility. Those skilled in the art will recognize that client computer systems could be connected to the server computer system by networks other than the Internet, however.

The server computer system 150 contains a memory 160. The memory 160 preferably contains merchant software 161 incorporating both the facility 162 and purchase
30 sharing data 163 preferably used by the facility.

The memory preferably further contains a Web server computer program 164 for delivering Web pages in response to requests from Web clients. While items 161-164 are

preferably stored in memory while being used, those skilled in the art will appreciate that these items, or portions of them, maybe be transferred between memory and a persistent storage device 172 for purposes of memory management and data integrity. The server computer system further contains one or more central processing units (CPU) 171 for
5 executing programs, such as programs 161-164, and a computer-readable medium drive 173 for reading information or installing programs such as the facility from computer-readable media, such as a floppy disk, a CD-ROM, or a DVD.

While preferred embodiments are described in terms in the environment described above, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the facility may be implemented
10 in a variety of other environments including a single, monolithic computer system, as well as various other combinations of computer systems or similar devices connected in various ways.

In order to more effectively describe the implementation and operation of the facility, it is hereafter discussed in the context of an example. Aspects of the example are
15 shown in Figures 2-7.

Figures 2-5 show examples of how the facility displays to a user information about purchases made by other users. Figure 2 is a display diagram showing a first portion of a shared purchases Web page for a sharing user whose nickname is "jj." This Web page lists some or all of the purchases made by the user jj that this user has elected to share.
20 Display 200 which shows a first portion of this Web page contains information about two shared purchases 210 and 220. In each case, the information about the purchase includes the name of the purchased product, which is typically a link to another page containing more extensive information about the product, as is product name 211. The information about a product may also include such information as a picture of the product, the type of the
25 product, the name of the product, the manufacturer of the product, the price of the product, a description of the product, purchase terms of the product, an artist who created the product, purchase terms for the product, as well as information of a variety of other types. The information about a purchased product may contain various other controls, such as an add to cart button like button 212 for adding the product to a shopping cart, or an add to wish list
30 button for adding the product to a wish list like button 213. Various other controls may also be included, such as a one-click purchase button (not shown) for immediately purchasing the product without further interaction.

Figure 3 is a display diagram showing a subsequent portion of the shared purchases Web page shown in Figure 2. The display 300 shows additional products purchased and shared by the user jj. The display shows information about three additional products 310, 320, and 330. Information about product 320 includes feedback from the user jj, including a rating 324 in a star rating system assigned by the user jj, and a description 325 authorized by the user jj. This information is generally generated by the purchasing user to assist those users who review the shared purchase in determining whether they are interested in purchasing the purchased product. This feedback on the product is different from the other kinds of information about a product that the merchant can provide, in that (a) it is clearly from the identified user, as opposed to a professional marketer, and (b) it reflects the individual style of the user that prepares it. These factors make it more likely in many cases that this form of user feedback will be given greater weight by other purchasers and lead to additional sales that otherwise would not have been produced by displaying other information about the product. In addition, acquaintances of the purchasing user may read this feedback from the purchasing user as a sort of communication from the purchasing user. Other users not acquainted with the purchasing user may read this feedback as a sort of literature. In both cases, these ways of regarding feedback from the purchasing user contribute to the stickiness of the merchant Web site.

Figure 4 is a display diagram showing a “Friends and Favorites” Web page for a user other than jj. This user, “Steve,” has a purchase information sharing relationship with the user jj. In the parlance of the display 400, jj is a favorite person and trusted friend of the user Steve. Accordingly, the Friends and Favorites Web page for the user Steve contains an indication 410 that the user jj has recently performed additional activity that is shared with her trusted friends and favorite people. The indication includes a link 411 that can be traversed to the shared purchaser’s Web page for the user jj shown in Figures 2 and 3. In this way, users who have a purchase information sharing relationship with the user jj can discover and read about the user jj’s recent purchases and/or recently-shared purchases.

Figure 5 is a display diagram showing a product description Web page. Display 500, in addition to a variety of other types of information about the product and controls for purchasing the product, includes a display 510 of other users who have purchased the product. The display 510 contains an indication 511 that jj has purchased the product. The indication 511 is a link to the portion of the shared purchases Web page for the

user jj that contains information about this product. In alternative embodiments, the indication 511 could contain additional information, such as any of the information shown on the shared purchases Web page for the purchasing user. By displaying this information on product description Web pages throughout the merchant Web site, the facility is able to deliver shared purchase information even to users that aren't aware of the shared purchases feature, or who fail to specifically seek it out. In many senses, if a user is considering the purchase of the product described in a product description Web page, an indication that the user's friends, whose judgment the user trusts, have already purchased the item may be a significant factor in influencing the user to purchase the product. Further, such indications on product description Web pages can serve to introduce or reintroduce the user to the shared purchases feature. In this case, the user may go on to investigate other shared purchases of this sharing user or other users.

Shared purchase information may be conveyed in a variety of other ways, including displaying purchase information on various other Web pages, sending users various types of electronic messages, or sending a postal letter to users, for example.

Figures 6-7 show examples of how a purchasing user may share information about the purchase of a product. Figure 6 is a display diagram showing a display produced in response to an order by the user Steve for a product. The display 600 shows the name of the product, as well as a share button 602 that the user may click in order to designate the product for purchase sharing. As is discussed in more detail below, the display 600 may in some embodiments include additional controls for specifying a group of users with which to share information about the purchase, and for providing feedback (at least preliminary feedback) about the product as part of the shared information.

Figure 7 is a display diagram showing a display usable by a user to share and offer feedback on past purchases. The display 700 contains a row for each of a number of past purchases, such as rows 710, 720, 730, and 740. Any of these purchases may be shared with either all users, or users with whom this user has special purchase information sharing relationships. The user uses radio button 701 to select either all users or users with whom the user has purchase information sharing relationships ("trusted friends"). In alternative embodiments, the user may designate other groups with which to share purchase information, including groups earlier defined by the user, groups dynamically defined by the user, groups defined by someone other than the user, groups that other users themselves opt into, and

groups automatically generated, such as groups in which all of the users share some set of characteristics, including such characteristics as items purchased, shopping pattern, geographical location, or any other information collected from or about users.

To share a particular purchase, the user checks the checkbox for the purchase, and optionally may add feedback about the purchase. For example, to share information about the purchase of the Modern Information Retrieval book shown in row 710, the user checks checkbox 711, and may also type comments in comments field 713, and select one of the product rating radio buttons 714. If the user wishes to share all of the products in the list, the user may click share all button 750 rather than checking each of the checkboxes.

Instructions for sharing purchases may be issued in a variety of other ways. For example, in some embodiments, a user may set a persistent “always share” flag in order to share information about each purchase as purchases are made. In one embodiment, this flag may be toggled on and off by the user in order to set the default behavior for automatically sharing each purchase as it is made. In another embodiment, such a flag may be permanently set for “celebrity shoppers” with whom the merchant reaches an agreement to shop at the merchant and share information about their purchases with other users.

Also, embodiments of the facility support sharing information about purchases made from other merchants, as well as purchases made by people other than the sharing user. For example, the facility preferably enables a user, when viewing information about a particular product, to indicate that the user already owns the product. When the user indicates that he or she already owns the product, the facility preferably prompts the user to indicate whether the user’s purchase of the product should be shared with other users. Additional embodiments of the invention enable a user to share information about a product purchased on that user’s behalf by someone else. For example, where a first user purchases a product as a gift for a second user, the second user may determine whether information about that purchase should be shared with other users. The second user may make this determination by any of the mechanisms described above. Alternatively, the facility may send the second user an email message indicating that the item has been purchased for the second user in soliciting a determination by return email of whether information about the purchase should be shared with other users. In some cases, such as where the “always share” flag is set for the second user, or where the product was purchased by the first user from a

publicly-viewable wish list generated by the second user, such purchases are automatically shared with other users.

Figure 8 is a display diagram showing a display showing a page for a user “Ryan” referencing the friends best sellers list for the user Ryan. The display 800 includes
5 information 801 about this friends best sellers list for the user Ryan. The information includes a link 802 to the friends best sellers list for the user Ryan.

Figure 9 is a display diagram showing the contents of the friends best sellers list for the user Ryan. The display 900 includes friends best sellers list 901. The friends best sellers list includes information about each of a number of products purchased by other users
10 with which the user Ryan has a purchase information sharing relationship. For example, information 910 relates to a “The Matrix DVD” product purchased by users with whom the user Ryan has a purchase information sharing relationship. Among this information is a count 911 of the number of such users that have purchased this product. The list 901 preferably sorted in the descending order of this count.

15 It will be understood by those skilled in the art that the above-described facility could be adapted or extended in various ways. For example, the facility may be implemented and/or operated by parties other than a Web merchant. The facility may also display information about purchases made from a variety of different Web merchants, and from merchants other than Web merchants. A facility may utilize a wide variety of different
20 ways to authorize the sharing of purchase information, to define and select groups of users with whom different types and quantities of purchase information is shared, and to actually share purchase information. While the foregoing description makes reference to preferred embodiments, the scope of the invention is defined solely by the claims that follow and the elements recited therein.

CLAIMS

We claim:

1 1. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information for a
2 selected user, comprising:
3 receiving from the selected user a list of users with which the selected user will
4 share purchase information;
5 receiving from the selected user an order for a specified item;
6 in response to the receiving the order,
7 processing the order for fulfillment;
8 displaying to the selected user a prompt to choose whether
9 information about the order should be shared with the list of users;
10 if input is received indicating that the user has chosen to share information
11 about the order with the list of users, storing an indication that information about the order
12 should be shared with the list of users;
13 when one of the users views a description for the specified item, if an
14 indication was stored, displaying with the description an indication that the selected user
15 ordered the product; and
16 when one of the users views a page relating to the selected user, displaying on
17 the page an indication that the selected user ordered the product.

1 2. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information for a
2 selected user, comprising:
3 receiving from the selected user a list of users with which the selected user will
4 share purchase information;
5 displaying to the selected user a list of items purchased by the selected user;
6 receiving user input from the selected user selecting a subset of the list of
7 items;

8 storing an indication that users among the list of users should be notified that
9 the selected user has purchased the selected items;

10 when one of the users among the list of users views a description for an item
11 among the selected items, displaying with the description an indication that the selected user
12 purchased the item; and

13 when one of the users views a page relating to the selected user, displaying on
14 the page an indication that the selected user ordered the selected items.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

2 receiving user input from the selected user specifying an evaluation of a
3 distinguished item among the selected items;

4 when one of the users among the list of users views a description for the
5 distinguished item, displaying the specified evaluation with the description and an indication
6 that the selected user purchased the item the specified evaluation; and

7 when one of the users views a page relating to the selected user, displaying the
8 specified evaluation on the page with the description and an indication that the selected user
9 purchased the item the specified evaluation; and.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the user input from the selected user
2 specifying an evaluation of the distinguished item specifies a quantitative rating of the item
3 distinguished.

1 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the user input from the selected user
2 specifying an evaluation of the distinguished item specifies a pictorial rating of the
3 distinguished item.

1 6. The method of claim 3 wherein the user input from the selected user
2 specifying an evaluation of the distinguished item specifies a textual discussion of the
3 distinguished item.

4 and wherein the stored indication contains an indication of the group of users
5 indicated by the received input.

1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the stored indication indicates that all
2 users should be notified that the selected user has purchased the selected items.

1 13. A method in a computing system for displaying to a first user
2 information about a purchase made by a second user, comprising:
3 receiving input from the first user to display a page describing a selected
4 product;
5 determining that the second user has purchased the selected product; and
6 when displaying the page describing the selected product to the first user,
7 displaying within the page a visual indication that the selected product was purchased by the
8 second user.

1 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising, displaying within the page
2 an assessment of the selected product by the second user.

1 15. The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving an instruction
2 from the second user to share information about the second user's purchase of the selected
3 product with the first user.

1 16. The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving an instruction
2 from the second user to share information about the second user's purchases with the first
3 user.

1 17. The method of claim 13, further comprising receiving an instruction
2 from the second user to share information about the second user's purchases with a group of
3 users including the first user.

1 25. A method in a computing system for notifying a first user about a
2 purchase made by a second user, comprising:
3 detecting that the second user has purchased an item;
4 determining that the first user has a purchase notification relationship with the
5 second user; and
6 providing to the first user a notification that the second user has purchased the
7 item.

1 26. The method of claim 25 wherein a notification that the second user has
2 purchased the item is provided to the first user by displaying a visual indication of the
3 purchase on a Web page requested by the first user.

1 27. The method of claim 25 wherein a notification that the second user has
2 purchased the item is provided to the first user by sending a message to the first user.

1 28. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is an electronic mail
2 message.

1 29. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is an instant message.

1 30. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is a pager message.

1 31. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is a snail mail
2 message.

1 32. The method of claim 27 wherein the sent message is a voice mail
2 message.

1 33. The method of claim 25, further comprising establishing for the first
2 user a purchase notification relationship with the second user in response to an instruction
3 from the second user.

6 providing to the first user a notification that the second user has purchased the
7 item.

1 43. A computing system for notifying a first user about a purchase made by
2 a second user, comprising:

3 a purchase detection subsystem that detects that the second user has purchased
4 an item;

5 a purchase notification relationship subsystem that determines that the first user
6 has a purchase notification relationship with the second user; and

7 a notification subsystem that provides to the first user a notification that the
8 second user has purchased the item.

1 44. One or more computer memories collectively containing a purchase
2 sharing data structure for a selected user, the data structure comprising information
3 identifying a group of users to be notified of items purchased by the selected user,
4 such that the contents of the data structure may be used to notify the identified group of users
5 of items purchased by the selected user.

1 45. The computer memories of claim 44 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two groups of users, each group of users to be
3 notified of a different set of items purchased by the selected user.

1 46. The computer memories of claim 44 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two groups of users, each group of users to be
3 notified in a different manner of items purchased by the selected user.

1 47. One or more computer memories collectively containing a purchase
2 sharing data structure a selected user, the data structure comprising information identifying a
3 set of items whose purchase by the selected user should be publicized to a group of other
4 users,

5 such that the contents of the data structure may be used to publicize the purchase of
6 identified items to a group of other users.

1 48. The computer memories of claim 47 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two sets of items, each set of items to be
3 publicized to a different group of other users.

1 49. The computer memories of claim 47 wherein the data structure
2 comprises information that identifies at least two sets of items, each set of items to be
3 publicized in a different manner.

50. A method in a computing system for displaying to a selected user
1 information about items purchased by other users associated with the selected user,
2 comprising:
4 from a set of item purchase indications for items purchased by associated users,
5 identifying items purchased by associated users; and
6 displaying information about each of at least a subset of the identified items.

1 51. The method of claim 50 wherein the displayed information is displayed
2 in an order reflective of the number of associated users that have purchased each identified
3 item.

1 52. The method of claim 50 wherein the displayed includes an indication of
2 the number of associated users that have purchased each identified item.

1 53. The method of claim 50 wherein the displayed includes the number of
2 associated users that have purchased each identified item.

1 54. One or more data signals that collectively convey a data structure, the
2 data structure comprising a list of at least a subset of items purchased by a group of users
3 associated with a selected user,

4 such that the contents of the data structure may be used to identify items purchased users
5 associated with the selected user.

1 55. The data signals of claim 54 wherein the list is ordered in accordance
2 with the number of associated users that have purchased each item.

1 56. The data signals of claim 54 wherein the list includes an indication of
2 the number of associated users that have purchased each item.

1 57. A method in a computing system for sharing purchase information using
2 a default sharing flag associated with a selected user that may be either true or false,
3 comprising:

4 detecting that the selected user has acquired an item;
5 in response to so detecting, determining whether the default sharing flag is true;
6 and

7 if it is determined that the default sharing flag is true, automatically providing
8 to users other than the selected user a notification that the selected user has acquired the
9 item.

1 58. The method of claim 57 wherein the default sharing flag applies to all
2 items purchased by the selected user.

1 59. The method of claim 57 wherein the default sharing flag applies
2 exclusively to items purchased for the selected user from a wish list associated with the user.

1 60. The method of claim 57 wherein the condition of the default sharing
2 flag is permanent.

1 61. The method of claim 57, further comprising:
2 receiving input from the selected user specifying a new condition for the
3 default sharing flag; and

4 in response to receiving the input, changing the default sharing flag to the
5 specified new condition.

1 62. One or more computer memories collectively containing a default
2 sharing flag data structure, comprising an indication of whether, when it is detected that a the
3 selected user has acquired an item, a notification that the selected user has acquired the item
4 should be automatically provided to users other than the selected user.

1 63. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the default sharing flag
2 applies to all items purchased by the selected user.

1 64. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the default sharing flag
2 applies exclusively to items purchased for the selected user from a wish list associated with
3 the user.

1 65. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the condition of the default
2 sharing flag is permanent.

1 66. The computer memories of claim 62 wherein the condition of the default
2 sharing flag is modifiable in response to input from the selected user.

SHARING INFORMATION ABOUT PURCHASES

ABSTRACT

A facility for notifying a first user about a purchase made by a second user is described. The facility detects that the second user has purchased an item. The facility further determines that the first user has a purchase notification relationship with the second user. The facility then provides to the first user a notification that the second user has purchased the item.

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

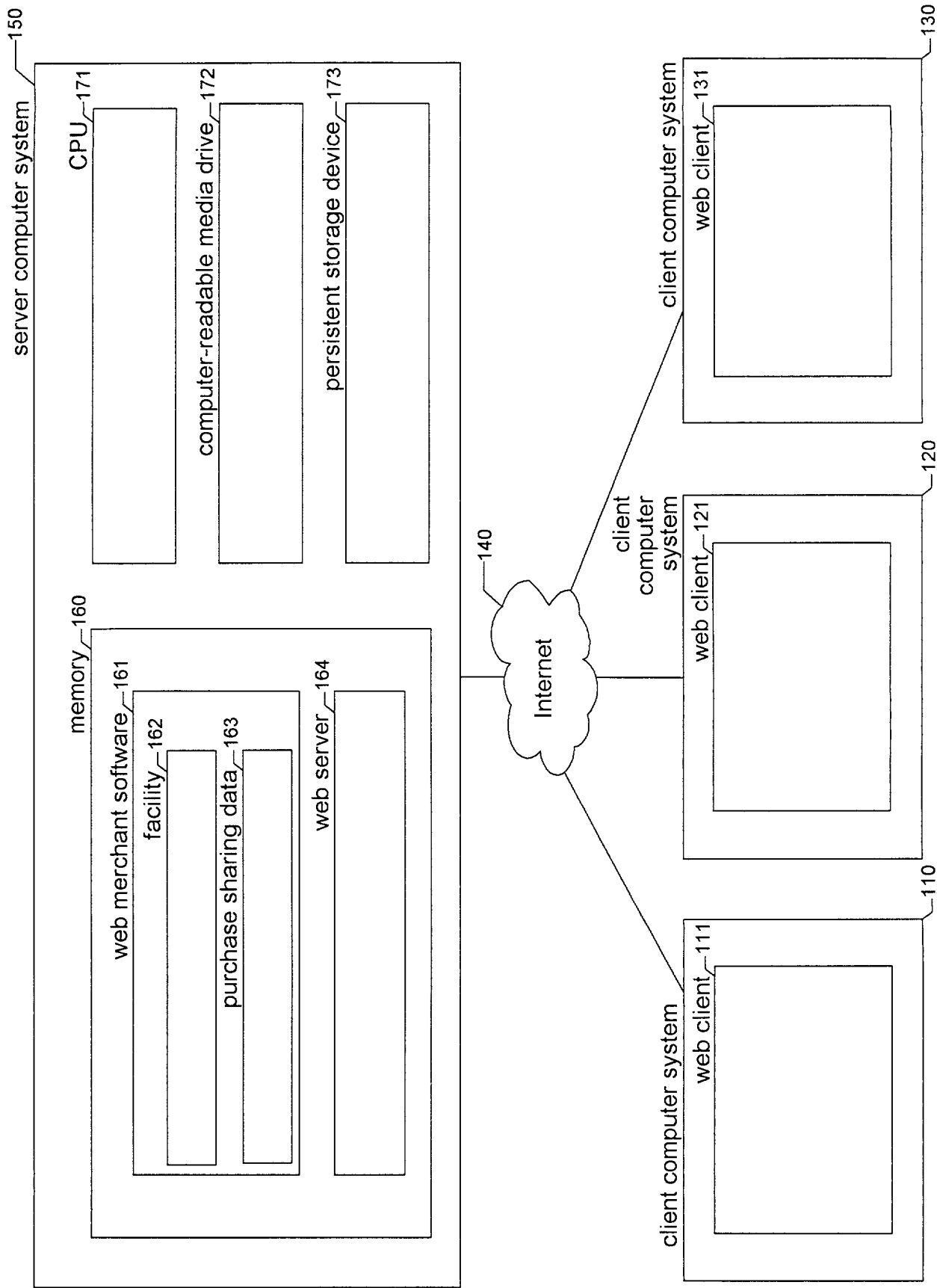


Fig. 1

Your Favorite People:

Save:\$10.00

310



Ceiva Internet-Enabled Photo Frame

by Ceiva

List Price: \$295.99 [Add to Cart](#)

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Putnam Pub

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(May 18, 2000)

jj's Rating and Comments: Last updated
324 June 12, 2000

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F163

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602

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 ~ Earth Wind & Fire

**Average Customer Rating:**

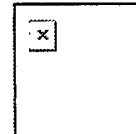
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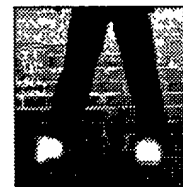
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(if you're not Ryan [click here.](#))

Useful product information from people you respect -- that's what you'll get out of Friends & Favorites. Check out what your Favorite People have been up to lately or [update your About You area](#) for your Friends to see

Clark Grubb's Wish List now includes:



[Nighthawks At The Diner](#)

~ Tom Waits

► [Clark Grubb's Wish List](#)

8 of your friends bought:



[Apocalypse Now DVD](#)

~ Marlon Brando

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[Trusted Friends](#): 176
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(220 helpful votes)

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197

Wish List: 3 of 106

items purchased

Favorite People: 180

Friends Bestsellers

Favorite Item Lists: 6

[Auctions](#)

Friends Bestsellers List

Friends that have purchased this item: 18 ⁹¹¹

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~ Keanu Reeves

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